

# Acceptable Professional Development Hours

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The State Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers (Board) often receives questions asking if certain activities or courses will qualify for the mandatory professional development hours (PDH) that all engineers must have for renewal of their license. The Board website has the general criteria for acceptable PDHs:

[http://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/already\\_licensed/pdh.html](http://www.maine.gov/professionalengineers/already_licensed/pdh.html)

The following are sample questions and answers in regard to earning professional development hours.

1. I am a civil engineer and attend an American Society of Mechanical Engineers program of one-hour duration, can I claim one PDH? **YES. Attendance at engineering professional society seminars or workshops for the requisite time will count as a PDH. It does not matter that the topic is not in your discipline. Make sure you obtain and keep documentation of your attendance, such as a certificate, roster, or email.**
2. Our firm has weekly meetings lasting at least an hour where we often discuss new technology or engineering practices, can I claim one PDH for this weekly meeting? **Generally, the answer is NO. There are some exceptions. If an outside speaker is presenting, the meeting is open to engineers employed outside the firm, and documentation of the date, time, location, topic, and speaker is made, the answer may be YES.**
3. The Maine Department of Transportation held a workshop for in-house engineering staff and contractors where roadside safety, specifications, procedures, contract language, or similar topics were discussed, can this time count toward my requisite PDHs? **YES. Be sure documentation, such as a certificate of attendance, copy of the attendance roster, or confirmatory email, is obtained for verification. The documentation should contain the date, time and duration, topic, sponsoring organization, location, and the instructor's name and qualifications.**
4. My employer required me to attend an in-house, five-hour OSHA construction safety workshop. Can I count this workshop as five PDHs? **YES. In-house programs related to engineering and engineering services generally count. Be sure proper documentation of attendance is obtained.**
5. I am a paid volunteer for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). When disasters occur, I go to the site and help assess the damage and structural integrity of buildings. FEMA has training sessions that I am required to attend where we are taught procedures, damage assessment, and other related topics. Can I claim PDHs for the service with FEMA? **You can claim PDH credit for the training sessions. You can NOT claim credit for the damage assessments or other services performed on behalf of FEMA.**
6. I am licensed as both a professional land surveyor and professional engineer. I recently attended a two-hour course on designing solar access in residential development. I plan to count two PDHs toward the renewal of my surveying license. Can I also count the same two PDHs toward the renewal of my professional engineering license? **YES. The application of the course toward other licenses has no bearing on using the same attendance toward renewal of the professional engineering license.**
7. I recently completed an engineering safety course required by my employer. The course was offered as an on-line course. It took me an hour and ten minutes to complete the course. At the end of the course was a multiple-choice exam. I passed the course and a certificate was sent to me. The certificate did not list the length of time. Will I be able to count the course as one PDH? **YES, but you must obtain a certificate stating the time period required to complete the on-line course is equal to or exceeds one hour. The certificate must also indicate your passing score. If you do not have documentation of the duration or assessment results you cannot count the course.**
8. I recently attended a four-hour workshop where the topic was on Federal procurement requirements for engineering services, can I count four PDHs? **YES. Completing management workshops that relate to the improvement of engineering business will count.**
9. I attended a dinner meeting of the American Society of Civil Engineers where a sociologist that was the dinner speaker. She spoke on the changing role of engineers in society. She spoke for 45 minutes. After she finished, there was a vigorous discussion of this topic at our table for over a half hour while we ate. Dinner was followed by a membership meeting. The meeting lasted for over an hour. How many PDHs can I count from attendance at this meeting? **You can count 0.5 PDH. The minimum PDH allowed is 0.5 (multiples of 0.5). The table discussion following the dinner speaker is not acceptable toward a PDH. The time spent in a professional meeting will not count toward a PDH (though active participation as an officer or committee member can be counted as 1 PDH per complete year of service during the renewal cycle).**
10. I am the president of a state engineering society. During the past year, I attended numerous conferences including, as a guest, neighboring state societies along with the National conference of the society. When I summed my PDHs at the various workshops I attended at the conferences and my professional membership I had over 60 PDH I could count for the renewal period. Realistically, how many should I count for the renewal period? **45 PDH. You will require 30 PDH for the renewal period and you can carry forward 15 PDH for the next renewal period. There is nothing wrong with counting all 60 PDH but if you are audited you have to provide supporting documentation for ALL 60 PDH since you claimed that many when you renewed.**
11. Recently I attended the dissertation defense of an engineering doctoral candidate. The dissertation was on the *Optimization of Design for Structural Polymers*. The defense lasted two hours. Can I count my attendance at this defense as two PDHs? **YES. The topic was an engineering topic. (It is not necessary**

that you understood all two hours of the discussion.) Be sure to obtain documentation of attendance to include time period, date, location, topic, sponsoring organization, and Ph.D. candidate.

12. I attended a free, two-hour presentation of an appropriate topic for a PDH. However, no certificate was issued or attendance roster was made. Can I count this attendance as two PDHs? **YES, but you MUST HAVE documentation of attendance if you are audited. Before leaving, prepare a written statement stating your name, your attendance, the time period, location, topic, sponsoring organization, and speaker. Have either the speaker or the representative of the sponsoring organization sign and date this statement.**

13. I developed a one-hour program on engineering ethics. A professional society asked me to present the program in Portland, Bangor, and Presque Isle. I made these presentations. How many PDHs can I count toward my license renewal? **TWO. As a speaker you are favored with a 2:1 ratio. For every hour of presentation you can obtain 2 PDHs. However, you can not get credit for teaching the same topic twice unless there are substantial changes in the presentation. Accordingly, you cannot claim credit for making the same presentation in Bangor and Presque Isle.**

14. I am an engineer in private practice. I was asked to give a one-hour presentation to a student engineering society at the University of Maine on an engineering project that our firm completed. The student society presentation dealt with many technical aspects of the project and how our firm overcame design problems that arose. A month later, the local chamber of commerce asked me to give a one-hour presentation on the same project. This time, the presentation focused on the social and economic benefits from the project. The similarity of the contents between the two presentations was less than 5%. How many PDHs can I count? **TWO. You can only count the presentation made to the student engineering society since that was the only presentation containing 'engineering content.' You benefit**

**from a 2:1 ratio for the one-hour presentation.**

15. I am a full time faculty member in a University engineering program. Recently, I was asked to present a paper in Austria on the engineering research I've accomplished (i.e., stress failure in laminated wood used in construction). The presentation lasted an hour. How many PDHs can I count? **TWO (2:1 ratio). Full-time faculty cannot get credit for teaching a course. This was a presentation outside of the faculty member's teaching responsibilities at the college.**

16. I am a vice-president in an engineering firm. My duties include press releases and other promotions for the firm. During the past year, I prepared three announcements for publication in trade magazines at the completion of the projects by our firm. I was also asked to prepare a two-page article for a monthly professional publication describing a project, the technical difficulties of the project, and how the difficulties were resolved. How many PDHs can I count? **Ten. The announcements about the three projects were merely press releases and can not count as a publication. The two-page article published in the monthly professional publication is a serious effort and would count as 10 PDHs. (For example, the preparation of this article you are reading does not count.)**

17. I am working on both an M.S. in engineering and an M.B.A. Last semester I took three, 3-credit courses. The courses were Statistics for Engineers, Labor Law and Organization, and Engineering Management. How may PDHs can or should I claim for these courses? **While you may be able to claim 90 PDHs (45 PDHs for Statistics for Engineers and 45 PDHs for Engineering Management), for practical purposes, you should only claim 45 PDH for the reasons stated previously (30 PDH required for the renewal period and 15 PDH to carry forward).**

18. I received an audit notice from the Board. At my last renewal, I claimed 45 PDHs. 15 PDHs were a carryover from a previous year. Do I need to include verification from the previous renewal? **Yes. During an audit you need to include verification for all PDHs claimed, including all PDHs from the previous renewal period if you claim any carryover PDHs.**

**You need to provide complete documentation from the current renewal and from the prior renewal to prove the carryover.**

19. How soon do I need to respond to an audit notice from the Board? **You MUST respond within 30 days. If you fail to respond in a timely manner to an audit notice, the Board can file a complaint against your license.**

20. What do I need to send in response to an audit notice from the Board? **You need to send a signed, completed PDH Activity Log from the Board website. In addition, you need to send documentation sufficient to provide evidence of attendance at EACH of the PDH courses you CLAIM. (See the responses above about claiming more than 45 PDHs.) Failure to send the complete documentation can result in a complaint being filed against your license.**

21. What's the big deal about a complaint? It's just a fine, right? **A complaint can result in a fine, suspension or ultimately revocation of your license. Board discipline can result in the loss of NCEES MLE status and impact your licensure mobility.**

22. What if I didn't get my PDHs completed? **DO NOT renew until and unless you have all of your PDHs completed. Your license expires December 31, 2015. If your license expires you CANNOT practice professional engineering in Maine until you renew your license.**

23. What if I am in the US Military? **Any licensee who is Active Duty US Military is exempt from PDH requirements AND renewal fees – however, you have to remind us by sending a letter and a copy of your orders each renewal period.**

24. Are PDHs ever excused? **YES, but you MUST write a letter to the Board. If you have an extenuating situation, hardship or disability, please write to the Board and include appropriate documentation. Please do that BEFORE your license expires.**